

A VIEW FROM CITY HALL

Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

The City of Sheboygan is a member of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative (GLSLCI). Mayors of the GLSLCI are a unique and united political voice who are active in the protection, restoration and enhancement of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River, improving the quality of life for this immense region's population. By using their integrated approach to environmental issues, the Cities Initiative's 130 Canadian and American mayors form a force to ensure the long-term sustainability of these precious resources for future generations.

At the recent GLSLCI Annual meeting hosted by Montreal Mayor Denis Cordre there were important resolutions passed by the assembled mayors. Sheboygan, Manitowoc and Port Washington mayors submitted a resolution to support the designation of the second NOAA National Marine Sanctuary on the Great Lakes on behalf of Two Rivers, Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Port Washington and Mequon. The resolution was approved unanimously by the GLSLCI mayors. This resolution will now be forwarded to NOAA and the US Congress.

The Trump Administration's proposed 2018 budget eliminates \$300 million in funding for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI provides funding for cleaning up toxic waste sites, improving storm water management, combatting invasive species like Asian carp, and protecting habitat for fish and wildlife in the basin. Mayors passed a resolution calling for Congress to appropriate the full \$300M to match the \$15B that is invested annually by cities around the Great Lakes basin.

A video by Matt Field was premiered at the meeting, Success Stories: The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. The video featured the Sheboygan River cleanup which received \$58M in GLRI funding. The video can be viewed at [Vimeo.com/221026326](https://vimeo.com/221026326)

Waterfront cities that rely on the lakes for their thriving tourism, navigation, industry, and drinking water are especially concerned about the cuts. The GLSLCI passed a resolution expressing extreme dissatisfaction with the Administration's ill-advised decision and called upon members of Congress to secure full funding for GLRI and called upon the Canadian Federal Government to create a similar funding program to assist the provinces and local governments to protect and restore this natural resource.

Resolutions were considered and passed to restrict the use of asphalt sealants that contain coal tar to protect human health and keeping the source of our drinking water free from harmful pollution. Another resolution supported US Funding to construct a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie, MI to sustain the maritime shipping industry. The GLSLCI called for restrictions on the use of microbeads (PPCP's) in personal care products and calling on pharmaceutical manufacturers to take responsibility for their products and provide disposal options for consumers. The City of Mississauga, ON presented a resolution to encourage the US and Canadian Governments to pursue a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve designation for the Great Lakes, the St. Lawrence River and

St. Lawrence River basin as the world's largest freshwater ecosystem. Another resolution called upon oil pipeline operators in the Great Lakes basin to maintain robust maintenance and emergency preparedness and to ensure the structural and operational integrity for oil pipelines to protect the health and safety of the Great Lakes basin and the population living in the region.

Mayor Paul Dyster of Niagara Falls was elected to head the GLSLCI for the next year. Mayors from the United States elected to serve new terms are the mayors of Milwaukee, Montreal, Duluth, Sheboygan, and Traverse City. Mayors from the Canadian Provinces elected to serve new terms are the mayors of Thunder Bay, Chatham Kent and the Township of Tay.